

SANTA BARBARA
NEWS-PRESS

PAGE D6

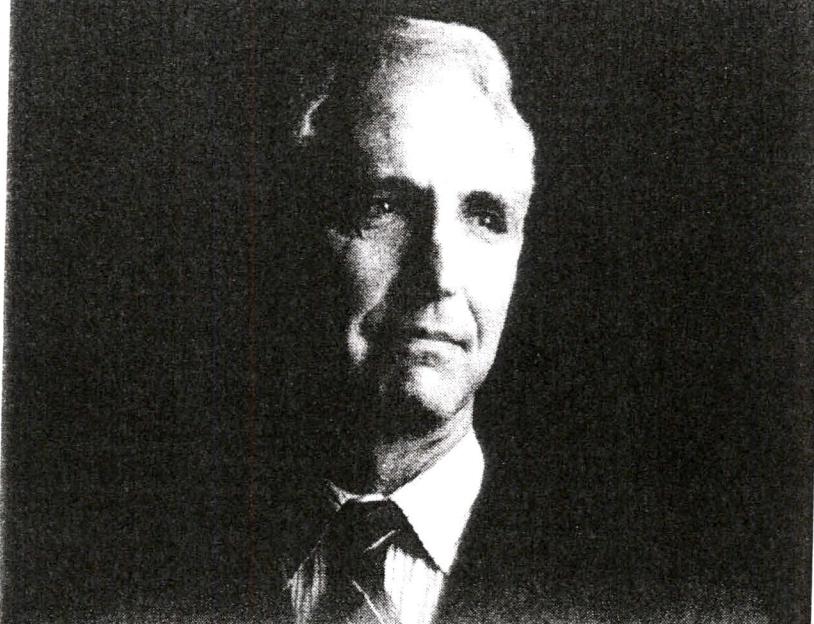
GARY J. ROBB Books Editor
grob@newspress.com / 564-5223

SUNDAY Books



UCSB ARTS & LECTURES PRESENTS

DANIEL ELLSBERG
Secrets: Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25 / 8 PM
UCSB LOTTE LEHMANN CONCERT HALL

Daniel Ellsberg offers an inside account of how and why he helped bring an end to the Vietnam War and Richard Nixon's presidency and discusses current abuses of presidential powers.



UCSB ARTS & LECTURES

TICKETS & INFORMATION
893-3535 ♫

WWW.ARTSANDLECTURES.UCSB.EDU

SUNDAY Books

OCTOBER 20, 2002

‘Secrets’ and uncovering lies

7 years of U.S. politics through the analytical eyes of Daniel Ellsberg

SECRETS: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers
By Daniel Ellsberg
Viking, \$29.95

By LIN ROLENS
NEWS-PRESS CORRESPONDENT

Why do we so often feel antipathy toward whistle-blowers, people willing to put careers and well being on the line to bring us information often vital to our well-being? Perhaps it's that they demonstrate that our emperors are less than fully clothed, and there is security in the belief our leaders

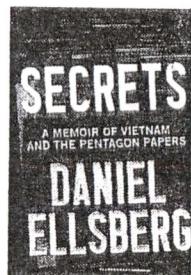
are always operating in our best interests. Certainly Daniel Ellsberg is the most unlikely of this century's prominent whistle-blowers. With his Harvard doctorate in economics, he was welcomed into elite inner circles: He worked for years as a foreign policy analyst for the Rand Corp. with unusually high clearance, and he worked with the government, advising on policy and analyzing material and meeting

with the likes of Robert McNamara and Henry Kissinger.

He started out as what now seems a remarkable oxymoron: a liberal cold warrior, tough on communism but liberal on domestic matters. He proceeded in his life and work with a sense of nobility, of purpose, a good guy on the right side.

What drove Mr. Ellsberg to copy the 7,000 pages of the Pentagon Papers and then leak them, first to key members of Congress and then to newspapers around the country helping to bring down the Nixon

Please see ELLSBERG on D7



BOOK SIGNING

Daniel Ellsberg will discuss and sign "Secrets: Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers" at 8 p.m. Friday in UCSB's Lotte Lehmann Concert Hall.

COURTESY PHOTO
Daniel Ellsberg offers an account of the deeply ingrained practice of governmental lying in "Secrets."

‘Secrets’ is powerful account of patriotism, conscience

■ ELLSBERG

Continued from Page D6

presidency and pushing the government to end the war in Vietnam?

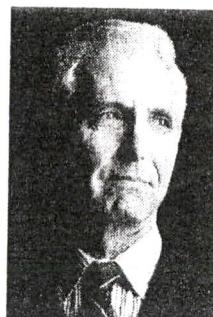
This remarkable memoir, covering the dozen years from Mr. Ellsberg's initiation into government practices to his acquittal on charges stemming from release of the top-secret documents, chronicles his eventual decision that he was morally obligated to let Congress and the American people know that five presidents, from both parties, had methodically lied about the state of Vietnam and our secret policies and actions there.

As more people on both sides of the war died needlessly, Mr. Ellsberg came to realize the importance of accountability and put his freedom and life on the line to ensure that the killing would stop and the democratic process be restored.

One of the first things to shake Mr. Ellsberg was a 1961 visit to Vietnam where, through the candor of American military men working as “advisers,” he came to believe that “nothing we were trying to do was working or was likely to get better. I read somewhere you don't have to be an ichthyologist to know when a fish stinks.” The next discovery to disturb him was the 1961 revelation that the Soviet nuclear threat was badly miscalculated; rather than a neck-and-neck race to nuclear superiority, our weapons outnumbered theirs by 10 to 1. But this was withheld from both Congress and the public, and the war machine rolled on.

Three years later, working for John McNaughton in the Defense Department, he is given “ten minutes to write six alternative lies” for Robert McNamara to explain to the press why a drone had gone down over China. As he explains the policy of the time, “It was in the national interest, as we saw it, to tell them whatever would best serve to free the president from their interference.”

Eventually, life circumstances led Mr. Ellsberg to volunteer to go to Vietnam as a Marine company commander. Here his extended account of what he



The liberal cold warrior (Daniel Ellsberg), daunted but still looking for lessons in our years in Vietnam, started working with the Pentagon Papers and quickly saw the pattern of denial and deceit that had permeated policy for many years.

saw proves disturbing and enlightening, and he returned home surer than ever that we could not win this war, that we were unwanted and had no business there. John Kennedy had been killed, Martin Luther King Jr. had been killed, and, most distressing to Mr. Ellsberg who had great admiration for him, Robert Kennedy was gunned down. The anti-war movement was now in high gear with powerful and committed intellectuals leading the way.

The liberal cold warrior, daunted but still looking for lessons in our years in Vietnam, started working with the Pentagon Papers and quickly saw the pattern of denial and deceit that had permeated policy for many years. Additionally, his community of friends now included anti-war activists who reminded him that, “He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it.”

Mr. Ellsberg did everything he knew to do inside the system to change the direction of policy, but it became clear that Nixon intended to escalate our

involvement. His choice to copy the Pentagon Papers eventually became a moral imperative, but the copying was no mean feat. Copiers were primitive, so the secret process was long and difficult; multiple copies were risky and expensive.

The goal was to stop the war: The first recipients of the massive history of deception were key congressional members, but each for his own reason didn't feel he could release it.

Finally, after trying again to leak into the administration through Kissinger, Mr. Ellsberg leaked the information to The New York Times after it promised to make substantial use of it; the government stepped in and Attorney General John Mitchell pushed a court to stop, for the first time in our history, a newspaper from publishing a story. The Washington Post received a copy, and soon other papers piled on, defying the government's warnings.

Mr. Ellsberg went underground, but the Nixon White House took him and Tony Russo, who helped with the copying, to trial, and the pair eventually was found innocent of wrongdoing. At least as chilling as the methodical lying to the people and to Congress and the clear indifference to casualties is the account, from White House tapes, of Nixon's attempt to discredit and “neutralize” Mr. Ellsberg, including offering the judge at his trial the position as head of the FBI.

“Secrets” is a powerful account of patriotism and conscience, an important exposé of deeply ingrained practice of governmental lying and the arrogance of power, and a profound cautionary tale for our times. Mr. Ellsberg's work provides a chilling reminder that “the lesson is that the people of this country can't afford to let the President run the country by himself, even foreign affairs, any more than domestic affairs, without the help of the Congress, without the help of the public.”

James Madison wrote emphatically: “A people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power knowledge gives.”

e-mail: life@newspress.com